

THAT WHICH IS CLAIMED:

1. A method of interfacing between a first and a second computer system to process a request by a customer to return a good purchased from a merchant, said method comprising the steps of:

establishing an interface system that is capable of communicating with said first and second computer systems;

receiving at said interface system a customer return request from said first computer system;

applying one or more business rules to said customer return request to determine whether said request is authorized;

assembling a return service request based at least in part on said customer return request;

transmitting said return service request to said second computer system;

receiving at said interface system an image of a shipping label from said second computer system in response to said customer return request; and

providing said shipping label image to said first computer system.

2. The method of Claim 1, wherein said first computer system is associated with said merchant.

3. The method of Claim 2, wherein said second computer system is associated with a commercial carrier.

4. The method of Claim 1, wherein said interface system communicates with said first and second computer systems via a computer network.

5. The method of Claim 1, wherein said interface system communicates with said first and second computer systems via the Internet.

6. The method of Claim 1, wherein the step of applying one or more business rules to said customer return request further comprises the step of using said one or more business rules to associate a return destination address to said return request.

7. The method of Claim 6, wherein the step of using said one or more business rules to associate a return destination address to said return request occurs only if said return request is authorized.

8. The method of Claim 1, wherein the step of assembling a return service request occurs only if said return request is authorized pursuant to said one or more business rules.

9. The method of Claim 1, further including the step of reformatting said shipping label image as an approximately four inch by six inch shipping label.

10. The method of Claim 1, wherein assembling a return service request comprises assembling said return service request as an XML document.

11. The method of Claim 1, further comprising the step of transmitting said shipping label image from said first computer system to said customer.

12. The method of Claim 1, further comprising the step of delivering said shipping label image to said customer.

13. The method of Claim 12, wherein the step of delivering said shipping label image to said customer comprises delivering said shipping label image to said customer via electronic mail.

14. A method of interfacing between a first and a second computer system to process a request by a customer to return a good purchased from a merchant, said method comprising the steps of:

establishing an interface system that is capable of communicating with said first and second computer systems;

receiving at said interface system, returns data relating to a customer return transaction;

assembling a return service request based at least in part on said returns data;

transmitting said return service request to said second computer;

receiving at said interface system, an image of a shipping label from said second computer system in response to said return service request; and

providing electronically said shipping label image to said first computer.

15. The method of Claim 14, wherein the step of transmitting said return service request to said second computer comprises transmitting said return service request via an XML feed.

16. The method of Claim 14, further comprising the step of updating a returns transaction database with said returns data.

17. The method of Claim 14, further comprising the step of updating a returns transaction database with information from said return service request.

18. The method of Claim 14, wherein said shipping label image includes a package tracking number and said package tracking number is stored in a returns transaction database.

19. A method of interfacing between a plurality of merchant computer system and at least one carrier computer system to process customer requests to return goods purchased from one of said plurality of merchants, said method comprising the steps of:

establishing an interface system that is capable of communicating with said plurality of merchant computer systems and said at least one carrier computer systems;

receiving, at said interface system, a customer return request sent by one of said plurality of merchant computer systems; said customer return request including a merchant identifier;

querying a merchant database with at least said merchant identifier to obtain one or more business rules associated with said customer return request;

applying said one or more business rules to said customer return request to determine whether to process said request and to associate a return destination address with said customer return request;

assembling a return service request based at least in part on said customer return request;

transmitting said return service request to said at least one carrier computer system;

receiving, at said interface system, an image of a shipping label from said at least one carrier computer system; and

providing said shipping label image to said one of said plurality of merchant computer systems that sent said customer return request.